CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 5 March 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Mutuale Kikanke (Zaire)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 615th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire, His Excellency Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya. It has become traditional for the President to introduce the eminent persons who honour our Conference with their presence, but where my own Foreign Minister is concerned, you will understand the difficulty of my position. Where should I decently begin in introducing to you the Minister who before me, in June of 1985, had the responsibility of presiding over the Conference? At that time, he was Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Zaire to the United Nations Office at Geneva, and I am sure that there are many of you who have already listened to him and with whom he had already collaborated. And just before becoming Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire, Mr. Bagbeni was the Permanent Representative of Zaire at United Nations Headquarters in New York, and in that capacity he was called on to preside over the Security Council during one of the periods which will certainly go down in the history of the United Nations and the Security Council. The Minister's career has been very extensive, very long and very brilliant. He has been an official, he has been a diplomat, he has been and still is a politician, a statesman. He was such a skilled official that he became the top official in Zaire - that is to say, Minister of the Civil Service; he was such a brilliant diplomat that he became the top diplomat of Zaire - that is to say, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire. This demonstrates that it would take a long time to describe such a brilliant career. I could sum up by saying that Minister Bagbeni is one of the jewels of the Zairian diplomatic corps and at the same time a respected authority in political circles in Zaire. We view his presence among us both as a source of inspiration and also as a testimony of the importance that Zaire attaches to the work of our Conference.

I also wish to extend a warm welcome to the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, His Excellency Ambassador Bruno Bottai. Ambassador Bottai has already participated in our work, on 7 August 1990, when he addressed the plenary of the Conference for the first time. He has taken up important diplomatic duties, having been appointed Ambassador of Italy to the Holy See and also to the Court of St. James's, and, as my predecessor remarked on the occasion of his previous visit, he has also been diplomatic adviser to the Prime Minister of Italy. His presence here bears witness to his country's interest in all disarmament-related matters. I am sure that the Conference will listen to his statement with very special interest.

Allow me now to turn to my left and express on behalf of the entire Conference, and on my own behalf, our congratulations to Ambassador Vicente Ernesto Berasategui on the occasion of his appointment to the post of Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General at the Conference. I would not venture to introduce to you a man whose merit, competence, discretion, sense of moderation and respect for others' convictions are well known to each of you. Ambassador Berasategui is a well-known personality in our Conference. Indeed, many of you could do a better job of introducing him than I can because he has

(The President)

been giving us the benefit of his valuable cooperation on this podium since 1979. Our Secretary-General is a brilliant lawyer from the University of Buenos Aires, and after obtaining a Master's degree in international relations and organizations at the American University in Washington, D.C., he took up a wide range of important duties in the Foreign Ministry of his country, Argentina, rising through all the levels of the administration and representing his country at innumerable international assemblies and meetings, either as head of delegation or as member of a delegation. Ambassador Berasategui has extremely extensive experience in disarmament matters. For example, he had a position on the Committee on Disarmament for many years; he was an observer at several international meetings on disarmament.

I should also like to extend a cordial welcome to the participants in the conference organized on the theme "Economic, social and cultural rights as a prerequisite for peace" who are attending our plenary meeting today. As you are aware, each year women's organizations meet in the Palais des Nations on the occasion of International Women's Day, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and is celebrated throughout the world. Our Conference has played a part in this event of paramount importance by becoming acquainted with the viewpoints and concerns expressed by the women gathered here representing organizations and groups in many countries. With your permission I will now invite the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to read out the message addressed to the Conference by the women meeting here.

Mr. BERASATEGUI (Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations) (translated from French): First of all, Mr. President, I should like to associate myself with the words of welcome you addressed to His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire, Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, with whom I had the honour and pleasure of cooperating when he occupied the Chair of the Conference in June 1985, and His Excellency the Secretary-General of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Ambassador Bruno Bottai, as well as the participants in the conference organized on the occasion of International Women's Day. I would also like to thank you for your kind words to me on the occasion of my appointment as Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

I hope to discharge my new responsibilities with the same effectiveness and the same devotion as my predecessors, Ambassador Miljan Komatina and Ambassador Riki Jaipal, the first Secretary-General of the Conference, who took on the responsibility of the burdensome task of reorganizing the multilateral negotiating body after the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. I would like to pay tribute to their skills and their wisdom, which were of inestimable value for the Conference and also for the secretariat.

The secretariat and myself remain at the disposal of all delegations for any matter relating to the work of the Conference.

(Mr. Berasategui, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

I would now like to read out the following message, addressed to the members of our Conference by the participants in the conference organized on the theme "Economic, social and cultural rights as a prerequisite for peace".

"This is the eighth year that we women gather in Geneva to mark International Women's Day. Once again we take this opportunity to observe a public session of the Conference on Disarmament and to express to you our interest in and support for your efforts to conclude agreements that can make our lives and our planet safer.

"We are fully aware that the Conference on Disarmament cannot function in a vacuum, and that successful negotiations depend not only on the good will and concerted efforts of its members, but to a large extent on the state of relations among nations and their Governments.

"As we noted a year ago, the dramatic changes that had taken place in the relations among European States, easing and eliminating East-West tensions, should open the way to rapid progress in a number of areas of disarmament negotiations. Our concern was then and remains so today, that after many years of discussions and negotiations, a treaty prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and for their destruction has still to be concluded. We note the expressed determination in the Conference on Disarmament that the chemical weapons treaty should be concluded before the end of this year. We are aware of the fact that a number of obstacles have been removed. However, we are aware also that obstacles, including obstacles in the area of verification, still exist. From your point of view, what can we activists for disarmament do to help lower and remove these obstacles?

"We note with satisfaction that the Conference on Disarmament will concern itself with the question of transparency in armaments. As citizens, we commit ourselves to be vigilant in our respective countries as to the development and maintenance of transparency in this new area.

"Later this year, the world's Governments will gather in Brazil in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. We are dismayed that the negative impact of military activities on environment and development receives so little attention in the preparatory process of the Conference. We appeal to this Conference, composed of members aware of, and knowledgeable about this link, to look into possible contributions to the development of international treaties and conventions.

"One aspect of this link is the continuation of nuclear weapons testing. We feel strongly that nuclear testing programmes should be stopped. Also, given the dangers that testing poses to the environment and the health of populations, and given the new and increasing dangers

(Mr. Berasategui, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations)

of proliferation, we urgently appeal to this Conference to advance its work towards agreements on the prohibition of the development production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and providing for the elimination of existing weapons.

"We welcome, of course, the significant agreements that have been reached between the United States and the former USSR and between NATO and the former Warsaw Treaty Organization in dismantling certain categories of weapons and reducing nuclear forces. We welcome the statements made in recent months by both the Governments of the United States and the Russian Republic to further reduce the stockpiles and eliminate categories of weapons. A genuine disarmament race would indeed be a very welcome way to travel into the 21st century.

"It is our ardent hope that all nations join in this race and that this Conference on Disarmament will assume the high task of negotiating and concluding rapidly the necessary treaties.

"We are concerned, as we are confident you are, for the lives of this and future generations, and for the health of our planet on which all life depends. It is everyone's responsibility to work for a peaceful future. But we look to you, having a particular responsibility for disarmament which is an essential component of the conditions for life to continue, with great expectations to rapidly pave the way with the greatest urgency.

"We wish you every success, and again assure you of our full co-operation".

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Secretary-General of the Conference for reading out the message from the participants in the conference organized on the occasion of International Women's Day. On behalf of the Conference, I thank them for the statement devoted to disarmament issues and wish them every success in their deliberations. I also wish to offer all the women associated with the work of the Conference on Disarmament our warmest wishes on the forthcoming occasion of International Women's Day, on Sunday, 8 March.

Before starting on the list of speakers for today, I would like to ask whether any delegations wish to take the floor at this stage, following the statement we have just heard. I give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. MORRIS (Australia): Firstly, may I, too, welcome the presence in our Conference today of His Excellency the Minister for External Affairs of Zaire, Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, and of His Excellency the Secretary-General of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bottai? Also, could I take the opportunity to express once again the satisfaction and congratulations

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

of the Western Group on the assumption to the posts of Personal Representative of the Secretary-General and Secretary-General of the Conference, to Ambassador Berasategui?

I have the honour to make the following statement on behalf of a group of Western countries. We are pleased to welcome back in the public gallery today the women who have gathered here once again to mark International Women's Day and who will now devote three days to discussion and reflection on current issues related to our common endeavours for the promotion of international peace and security. We pay particular homage to the organizers of this annual event, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which was founded in April 1915, by women from belligerent and non-belligerent countries alike, in protest at the carnage of the First World War. The League is one of the oldest non-governmental organizations still working actively for the promotion of peace today.

The end of the cold war has brought with it greatly enhanced opportunities for organizations which are committed to the promotion of global peace and stability - both governmental and non-governmental - to move closer towards their common goals. Here in the Conference on Disarmament there are opportunities to be seized. The negotiations for a chemical weapons convention being conducted in the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons is a particular and indeed pressing case in point. An effective convention can be concluded this year, and this is a major challenge for us here in Geneva.

When international agreements are reached on arms control and disarmament issues, international norms for behaviour which will impact on all world citizens are established. Clearly, in order to be effectively implemented and respected, such rules must be based absolutely on principles of equal rights and opportunitites. Women carry with them a long and often painful history of struggle for the attainment of equal rights and opportunities. And while they have not shirked their responsibilities in taking on equal obligations, they continue to be faced all too frequently with barriers to gaining the equal rights and opportunities to which they are entitled.

An issue of continuing concern to us is the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations Secretariat. It is worth reiterating why this issue is so important and fundamental. Firstly, women's equality is a matter of basic human rights and social justice - as stated in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations. Secondly, in an international secretariat, just as there is a need for widespread geographical distribution in order that the problems of no region be overlooked, so it is necessary for women to be represented at senior policy-making levels in order that the problems of half the human race, and the way in which the United Nations programmes affect them, be fully taken into account. Finally, the equitable promotion of women on the basis of their merit can only improve the efficiency of the Organization. It will ensure that highly talented staff irrespective of their gender are not prevented from attaining positions commensurate with their abilities.

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

There has recently been some progress towards the goal of equality in the United Nations. 1991 saw the appointment of Mrs. Ogata, as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and of Ms. Catherine Bertinais as Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme. This brought to three the total number of women who have headed the 31 major United Nations agencies since 1946. Overall women remain under-represented in the United Nations professional staff. They constitute not quite 30 per cent of the professional staff. And the pace of progress towards equality continues to be painfully slow. Over the past decade there has been a rise of less than 1 per cent in the level of professional women's representation in the United Nations. And yet the Secretary-General states in his 1991 Annual Report that, as a concern, gender equality is second to none. I regret to say that the available evidence suggests that the concern exhibited by the Secretary-General is not reflected in practice throughout the United Nations. The lack of progress over the past few years shows that greater commitment is needed on the part of the senior managers of this Organization to the advancement of women. And this commitment needs to be demonstrated clearly.

The theme for this year's International Women's Day is "Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as a Prerequisite to Peace: A Challenge to Women". The importance of economic and social progress for women, and equally the importance of women's role in achieving this progress, is one of the major preoccupations of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which will begin its thirty-sixth session in Vienna next week. Indeed, "development" and "peace" are two of the three priority themes of the United Nations Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000. At its thirty-sixth session the Commission on the Status of Women will consider, under the theme of development, "Integration of women in the process of development" and under the theme of peace, "Women's equal participation in all efforts for international cooperation, peace and disarmament".

The issues to be considered thus take on particular significance for the work of the Conference on Disarmament. While in New York there is a reasonable number of women engaged in disarmament affairs, it is of great concern that at the Geneva end only one of the five Professional positions is held by a woman. In this context the United Nations General Assembly has urged the Secretary-General to accord priority to increasing the participation rate of women within the Secretariat, and has laid down a target of an increase to 35 per cent by 1995, with a 25 per cent participation rate by women in posts at the D-1 level and above. As noted in document A/46/377, in order to meet this target, a substantial number of women will have to be recruited and promoted each year, particularly at higher levels.

Let me conclude by saying that it is clear that women must be viewed as an integral part of the entire United Nations system, if the intent and the word of the Charter which governs all our work is to be implemented in a just and honest way. The responsibility for promoting the equal participation by women in all efforts for international cooperation, peace, and disarmament thus rests on all our shoulders. The role of non-governmental organizations such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom continues to constitute a valuable contribution to those efforts.

(Mr. Morris, Australia)

Mr. President, finally and with your indulgence, I would like to take this opportunity in a rather different capacity, that of my chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons Working Group on Verification, to make a brief announcement, if I could, and that is that the meeting scheduled for tomorrow morning will not now take place, although I would invite delegations to check their document boxes by early afternoon to receive the paper which will form the basis of our discussions on Monday's meeting.

Mr. NEAGU (Romania): May I welcome the presence at today's meeting of the Conference on Disarmament of the distinguished Minister for External Affairs of Zaire, His Excellency Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya? It is with particular pleasure that I would like to convey our congratulations to Ambassador Vicente Berasategui on his assumption of the post of Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. As you have rightly observed, Sir, indeed Ambassador Berasategui needs no introduction. Everybody around this table and the Conference as a whole has greatly benefited from his competence, diligence and tact, especially since 1984 when he started his association with the Conference. We are sure that his expertise and advice will greatly help us in our deliberations in the fulfilment of the mandate of the Conference. May I wish him all the best, full success in his important post?

I wish to extend a warm welcome to the distinguished ladies assembled in Geneva to mark International Women's Day and present at today's meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

We would like to thank them for the important declaration adopted at their conference. International Women's Day is celebrated each year, on 8 March, all over the world as a recognition of the essential role of women in all fields of human endeavour.

We are aware of and appreciate the important activity women develop in non-governmental organizations for promoting peace and disarmament on our planet. We listened with great interest to the declaration read out at the Conference. The topic chosen this year - economic, social and cultural rights as a prerequisite to peace - is a particularly appropriate subject at a time when rapid and dramatic changes occur in Europe and in the ever more interdependent world. It is our responsibility at this Conference to negotiate disarmament agreements that will open the way to a safe and secure future, free from the menace of weapons of mass destruction. Arms control and disarmament have a bearing on peace and the well-being of the people of the world.

I can assure all ladies honouring our plenary session today and manifesting interest in the work of the Conference on Disarmament that we feel encouraged in our efforts by their presence here, that their message constitutes a new and fresh stimulus for our deliberations and that we shall do our best in order to achieve the objective of establishing inter-State relations not on military force but on cooperation. I would like to conclude by stressing how honoured I feel to wish our distinguished guests success in their work, social activity and family life.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): First of all, the Chinese delegation would like to express its welcome to His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire, Mr. Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, and His Excellency Ambassador Bruno Bottai, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, for their presence and their statements in our plenary. Like the previous speakers, the Chinese delegation also wishes to congratulate Ambassador Berasategui sincerely on his assumption of the post of Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and assure him of its continuous and full cooperation.

International Women's Day is one of the major international festivals. On this day more than 500 million women in China join their sisters all over the world in celebrating this event. Today, on the eve of the festival, representatives of a number of international women's organizations have honoured our plenary with their presence. We would like to express our welcome to them and extend our congratulations to them and all other women present.

Arms control and disarmament is a major issue that has a bearing on the peace, security and development of the people of the world. Today, when the world situation is undergoing enormous changes, international disarmament efforts are faced with opportunities for major progress as well as numerous challenges. It goes without saying that our task in the field of disarmament becomes even more important and at the same time remains very difficult. It is therefore more imperative for the international community, including the community of women, to make joint efforts. Many international organizations and non-governmental organizations, including women's organizations, have made great contributions in this regard, and will play an even greater role in the future. The Chinese delegation would like to express its appreciation for their efforts and contributions.

Mrs. BAUTA (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): As this is a special occasion in the plenary of the Conference on Disarmament, it is an honour for the Cuban delegation, on behalf of the Group of 21, to take the floor this morning and welcome the presence in this room of the eminent persons who are with us this morning, from your country, Sir, the Minister whom we indeed know because of his outstanding performance in the work he was assigned as President of the Security Council. The same applies to the presence of the Minister and Under-Secretary from the Italian Foreign Ministry. Today is undoubtedly a very special day because we also have the particular pleasure of welcoming Ambassador Vicente Berasategui in his new position. We know he will carry out this new task with the skill he has always demonstrated in these duties.

Perhaps the Group of 21 has decided to follow a somewhat unusual procedure today in asking a woman representative of the delegations that make it up to take the floor on this occasion in order to have the pleasure of welcoming the presence in this room of the women who follow from a distance, but with no lack of effectiveness - far from it - the concerns that we all share to reach genuine multilateral solutions for the problem of disarmament as the only real guarantee that we will be able to bequeath to our children

(Mrs. Bauta, Cuba)

and to the generations that will follow a safer and therefore better world. The efforts which are close to the feelings of this distinguished group of ladies present in this room this morning are justified and are also broad-based in so far as they proceed from the best approach to the problems of disarmament, which are seen from an all-round viewpoint that also includes a concern for development. The entire Group of 21 extends its greetings to them on the celebration of International Women's Day next Sunday and our express wishes that they should pursue the effort that brings them here today. We are convinced that no effort can be successful unless the intelligence, love and perseverence that are characteristic of the women of the world are harnessed to it.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Cuba very much for her statement, which she also made on behalf of the Group of 21. I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. GROSSI (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): My delegation fully endorses and associates itself with the terms of the statement which the delegation of Cuba, on behalf of the Group of 21, has just made to welcome the presence here this morning of the ladies who are meeting under the auspices of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom on the occasion of International Women's Day. Their message and their presence among us are a stimulus for our work and a useful and timely reminder of our special responsibility before the international community. Like the delegations that spoke before me, I also wish to welcome the presence among us this morning of His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire, His Excellency Bagbeni Adeito Nzengeya, and the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Ambassador Bruno Bottai. We are eagerly looking forward to their respective messages.

On this occasion I would like to say a few brief words on behalf of my delegation with regard to the formal installation of Ambassador Vicente Ernesto Berasategui as Secretary-General of this Conference on Disarmament. I will not repeat what has already been said concerning the professional and personal background of Ambassador Berasategui; it is well known to all. Allow me merely this morning to note the sincere satisfaction and legitimate pride at seeing a distinguished ambassador from the Argentine foreign service take on the important duty of guiding the work of this Conference in such an important year for our negotiating efforts. We are sure that he will continue and develop the outstanding tradition of Ambassadors Riki Jaipal and Miljan Komatina in the appropriate manner. Ambassador Berasategui, please accept these words of satisfaction and congratulations from your Government and those of this delegation, which not long ago you led with the same enthusiasm as you will now devote to your new and important duties.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): We can now move to the list of speakers for this morning. On the list are the representatives of Zaire, Italy and Belgium. It is with special pleasure that I invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire to deliver his statement.

Mr. BAGBENI (Zaire) (translated from French): It is a great privilege for me to take the floor on behalf of my country and my delegation in the Conference on Disarmament in its capacity as President of this important and unique negotiating forum in the field of disarmament. Following Yugoslavia as President of the February 1992 session of the Conference on Disarmament, I can appreciate the honour done to my country, Zaire, of presiding for a second time over the Conference on Disarmament, in view of the fact that I had the pleasure of so doing in June 1985 for the first time; presiding over this important session which is of great importance following the forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I would like to pay a special tribute to His Excellency Ambassador Miljan Komatina, former Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, for the skill he displayed during his term of office. I would also like to express my warmest congratulations to Ambassador Vicente Ernesto Berasategui, the new Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, with whom I have had the honour of working for many years, both in Geneva and in New York; I have confidence in his intellectual and moral skills, and I have no doubt that he will successfully discharge his new functions. I would also like to welcome in this room the presence of the women who are participating in the conference on the subject of economic, social and cultural rights, and to say to them that their presence in our midst and the forthcoming celebration of International Women's Day next 8 March emphasize once again the dynamic role that women play throughout the world in promoting peace in the world.

It is well known that our world is undergoing deep and extensive changes both in the political and in the social spheres. Political innovations, new initiatives taken here and there, both regionally and internationally, the irreversible upsurge of democracy, the impetus for pluralism in opinions and ideas, the constant reminders of the relevant provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that underlie these profound changes have made it indispensable today for all modern political societies to take into account all the parameters that form the basis of the world that is being forged before our eyes.

In this context, my country, Zaire, endorses the irreversible march that its people undertook starting on 24 April 1990 towards a complete and full process of pluralist democratization which will shortly give rise to the advent of a really democratic Third Republic. Whatever the vicissitudes encountered on this path of democratization, the present Government headed by His Excellency Mr. Nguz a Karl-i-Bond is determined to complete this process in order to give Zaire democratic institutions after a constitution has been drawn up and adopted by means of a referendum that will take place this year. This indicates how much the Zairian people as a whole is attached to this noble and democratic objective.

The new world which is being built is intended to be a world of peace and security which will be marked by enhanced international cooperation while safeguarding the sovereign equality of States but without the threat of the use of nuclear, conventional or chemical weapons or ideological confrontation.

(Mr. Bagbeni, Zaire)

This is undoubtedly the right place to express our full appreciation for the statement that the Russian President, Mr. Boris Yeltsin, made on 29 January last concerning the limitation and reduction of nuclear weapons. With these geopolitical upheavals which because of that very fact entail a sometimes harrowing review of military alliances and strategies, the inevitable conversion of certain military-industrial complexes is necessary. The world faces new prospects of the use of the scientific military potential and colossal financial resources that were devoted to weapons, for new tasks of economic development and social progress which should benefit mankind as a whole. The world is definitely no longer involved in a race to over-arm. And therefore we can better understand the relevance of the recommendations of the Conference devoted to disarmament and development. It seems clear to us that disarmament without economic progress in the countries of the third world, without a reduction of the gap that separates the countries of the North from those of the South, will only exacerbate bitterness and deepen the lack of understanding and disparities in the world. And we cannot try to promote the civilization of the Universe if such inequalities persist.

Zaire views positively the new era which is marked by these changes of all kinds. Yet it is necessary to express misgivings at the emergence of notions and ideas concerning a certain right of interference which certain former colonial Powers have been claiming with regard to their former colonized countries. The rules of international law enshrine the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States and contain no provision, at present, for meddling and interference in the internal affairs of other States, small or large, of any nature whatever. Under resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 proclaiming the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the aspirations of peoples alone enable them to decide on their own future and freely choose their political system. Yet while we encourage all these political changes, we must beware of believing with complacent optimism that democracy automatically opens our countries to economic progress and social and cultural development. Zaire considers that democracy constitutes a means and not an end in itself, which should enable the people to be constantly consulted and involved in all activities in the political and economic life of the nation. Its economic, social and cultural development will depend on the mobilization of its human, economic and financial resources, and especially on the creative genius which will be demonstrated by its people.

The present Conference on Disarmament has a very rich and very varied agenda. It enables each of our delegations to assess the progress made on each of the items on it in order to envisage more dynamic prospects regarding items on which real progress has been made as far as negotiation is concerned. To that end, my delegation considers that the multilateral convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and their destruction, which was, moreover, the subject of the Paris Conference, from 7 to 11 January 1989, has been unanimously welcomed by the member States and that it would therefore be appropriate for this convention to enjoy accession by all the States members of the Conference on Disarmament so that an arsenal is finally removed from the list of weapons of mass destruction constituted by chemical weapons. To

(Mr. Bagbeni, Zaire)

that end my delegation wishes to congratulate all the chairmen of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons who have worked steadfastly to finalize the text of this convention on chemical weapons after the intensive negotiations and consultations they had to conduct for that purpose. The question of the conclusion of an international convention on chemical weapons which is on the agenda of this Conference is, without any doubt, one of the subjects that has focused the greatest attention of the international community in recent years. The Geneva Protocol of 1925 on chemical weapons signed under the auspices of the League of Nations raised complex questions, so much so that many countries did not hesitate to circumvent it, if not disregard it. That is why, following so much improper use of the relevant provisions of the Protocol, this question has been the subject of substantial discussions here in Geneva on many occasions in order to add to it and develop it.

Since the international conference on chemical weapons held in Paris, notable progress has been made in Geneva. So many obstacles have been removed, so many rewarding discussions have been held on chemical weapons, but what is important is that we must crown our efforts, because between now and the end of the year this convention will be concluded, and therefore signed by all the States parties - at least that is our hope.

I cannot but recognize that, with regard to nuclear disarmament, decisive progress has been made by the United States and the former USSR. Consequently, Zaire welcomes the emphasis that is currently being placed on the question of general and complete disarmament, and the forthcoming signature in Paris at the end of July 1992 of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) by which the United States and the Russian Federation have undertaken to reduce their long-range intercontinental strategic weapons substantially further boosts the process of nuclear disarmament. This treaty, like the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-range and Shorter-range Missiles (the INF Treaty), constitutes the most striking proof that tangible progress can be made thanks to the political will of all the partners in the disarmament negotiations. Zaire hails and welcomes the conclusion of these two agreements as decisive steps along the path to nuclear and complete disarmament to which the international community aspires.

Allow me to welcome the initiative announced by President Bush, on 27 September 1991, as well as the positive reaction prompted by this initiative in Moscow. This is a step towards genuine disarmament reversing the arms race. I also hope that President Bush's forthcoming meeting with President Yeltsin will signpost the paths towards further enhanced nuclear disarmament. In this same context, Zaire welcomes with particular satisfaction the decision of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, announced on 17 October 1991, to remove another 700 warheads from the nuclear arsenal of the Western alliance in Europe and to destroy 50 per cent of the nuclear devices that are stockpiled there. To this list of decisions adopted by NATO we should add the signature of agreements dealing with conventional forces in Europe - the CFE Treaty - confidence-building and security-building - Vienna document 1990 - and the joint declaration by NATO and the Warsaw Pact that put an end to the cold war once and for all. I think it is important to emphasize

(Mr. Bagbeni, Zaire)

that in the world of conventional weapons and forces, the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe can be considered as the most complex regional agreement on arms control.

With regard to the prevention of the use of nuclear weapons in the event of armed conflict between States, I would like to note with satisfaction that following the end of the cold war and ideological rivalry between the countries of Eastern Europe and those of the West, the risk of such a conflagration has considerably diminished. But the danger remains among the other countries that have acquired nuclear technologies. It was feared during the Gulf war that the Iraqis might use nuclear weapons in order to resolve the Middle East conflict, that the use of such weapons might constitute a means of political blackmail that would have enabled them, after the aggression perpetrated against Kuwait, to keep what they had acquired. This means that nowadays the danger of a nuclear war does not lie solely within the initiative of the nuclear Powers but also other countries possessing nuclear weapons or the scientific potential to produce them. And in this context, the conduct of certain industrialized countries that cooperate with developing countries in the field of nuclear weapons is to be condemned, especially when we remember that this type of cooperation does not always take place in the absence of a quest for profit, and when all those involved know that weapons of mass destruction are involved. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is the treaty that has served as an international instrument to prevent this type of cooperation. And here we welcome as positive gestures the intentions expressed by France, China and Pakistan to accede to this Treaty. And I would also like to express my country's satisfaction at seeing South Africa accede to it. My country nevertheless would like to echo the concern expressed recently by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany concerning the need to provide the NPT with sanctions which would be imposed on any State party breaching the provisions of the Treaty. Zaire subscribes to the idea of sanctions that should be adopted by the Security Council, as the organ that is entrusted with international peace and security against any State that fails to respect the provisions of the Treaty.

We know that the atom has opened up unlimited prospects for the health sciences, agriculture, and so on, and that as long as nuclear science is used for peaceful purposes to alleviate human suffering or to improve crops, mankind can only benefit, but to use nuclear weapons for purposes of destruction will always be an insane act and therefore to be condemned. Consequently, I would like accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by many countries to make this international legal instrument the mandatory route which will restore tranquillity, peace and sound cooperation among States in the area of nuclear science. In this context I would like to congratulate the authorities of Brazil and Argentina following the agreement that the two countries have just signed in Guadalajara on the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Allow me in conclusion to dwell a little on resolution 46/36 L which deals with transparency in international transfers of conventional weapons. It has seemed to us that this resolution is incomplete for two fundamental reasons which relate to universality and non-discrimination. As has been

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rightly pointed out by some delegations, arms transfers should necessarily include transfers from producers to users and sites of stockpiles. With regard to the proposed register, a few procedures remain to be followed for it to make a real contribution to disarmament. Further work on our part will no doubt be decisive in this matter.

I would like to wish the Conference on Disarmament every success and to hope that in the near future it will reach positive conclusions.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire very much for his important statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Italy, His Excellency the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Bruno Bottai.

Mr. BOTTAI (Italy): A period of two years has elapsed since my previous visit, and it gives me great pleasure to again have the honour of addressing the Conference on Disarmament. I first of all congratulate you on your appointment to the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, which, during the course of the year, should achieve substantial new targets: I am certain that this session's proceedings will benefit greatly from your skilful leadership. It is for me today an additional pleasure and honour to have the opportunity to address this Conference on the occasion of the participation in our proceedings of His Excellency Mr. Bagbeni Nzengeya, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zaire. Allow me also to address a special greeting to the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and to all the women they represent here, whose international day we shall shortly be celebrating. Their efforts and commitment for the cause of international peace and security are an integral part of the endeavours to achieve general and complete disarmament.

My presence here is inspired by the interest with which Italy views your activity within the framework of a body representing the only multilateral forum capable of exerting its activity in various fields of primary importance for disarmament as a whole. The strategic and ideological confrontation between East and West is now over and more homogeneous processes in the internal organization of States in Europe are under way, disclosing new perspectives for disarmament. In such a favourable environment, Italy has endeavoured to encourage wider forms of conventional arms limitations in Europe and has rapidly completed its own process of ratification of the CFE Treaty; has extended its own activity in the field of the prevention of the proliferation of all types of weapons, with the introduction of rigorous legislation on the arms trade; has endorsed the principle of "full-scope safeguards" in nuclear exports.

Even established international institutions are undergoing a process of transformation to adapt themselves to the new realities. At its summit held in Rome last November, the Atlantic Alliance formalized a process of deep restructuring of its functions and strategy, thus opening the way to a new era of cooperation with the former potential adversaries of central and eastern Europe, and with the new States that have emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet Union. CSCE, greater in size and, as we strongly hope, with an

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increased capacity for internal mediation in a framework of tolerance and the rule of law, is now striving towards an appropriate institutionalization of its own structures aimed at establishing a security system of a cooperative type among its members, where any resort to force for the settlement of disputes that is unfortunately not only potential in character, could be definitely discarded.

However, in spite of such a promising general political climate, it would be misleading to neglect the risks of tensions and instability still existing in various forms in different regional contexts, including Europe, as a result of re-emerging strong nationalistic forces alongside the deteriorating economic conditions typical of transitional phases. As a consequence, the most industrialized countries are becoming increasingly conscious of their growing responsibilities in offering support when situations of great need and distress occur, in the awareness that a minimum of collective well-being is the prerequisite for attaining real progress in peace and democracy. The problem of a drastic reduction in expenditure in sectors that have been absorbing great shares of financial resources arises with greater emphasis, to meet such efforts of solidarity and ever-growing needs.

Italy has always been convinced of the necessity to drastically reduce nuclear arsenals well beyond the limitations spelled out in the START Treaty, and considers therefore that the initiatives and proposals of President Bush about further radical reductions in strategic nuclear armaments, as well as the most recent proposals by President Yeltsin, represent steps in the right direction, reshaping in thoroughly modified terms the equation of collective security, the strategic balance and disarmament. Alongside such moves, as far as Europe is concerned, there is also the foreseen elimination of all ground-based nuclear tactical weapons as well as the strong progress registered in the process of conventional disarmament.

In addition to such encouraging improvements, the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty itself has lately gained greater momentum as the basic instrument for the prevention of proliferation. After the positive review in the positions of those countries that had long felt reservations with regard to the Treaty or its safeguards regime, such as France and China among the nuclear Powers, together with various other non-nuclear countries, there are growing expectations that those remaining countries which still hesitate to join the NPT regime might also in the near future review their positions. They would otherwise risk isolation in the context of a non-proliferation regime now accepted by the great majority of countries, which Italy strongly hopes will acquire indefinite duration at the next review conference in 1995. Moreover, initiatives of great interest and positive impact have already occurred in a regional context; I am thinking, first and foremost, of Argentina and Brazil.

We ask ourselves at this stage whether we are not already witnessing the first moves towards a post-nuclear era, given the fading role of the once dominant nuclear arsenals in international strategic relationships, as we perceived it for over 40 years. The surviving threat seems to be today more connected with certain risks of proliferation and tensions in some regional

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frameworks or with the possibility of errors or miscalculations, rather than actual escalation into a global conflict. It thus seems unavoidable that questions like the prohibition of nuclear testing, to which the CD has for a long time devoted its attention without being able to remove all the persisting reservations, will need to be addressed with a renewed sense of urgency so as to keep pace with the great progress already recorded or anticipated in the field of nuclear arms reductions. Italy, having long shared the view that the elimination of nuclear testing cannot be dissociated from the problem of the size of existing arsenals, is therefore of the view that conditions are now ripe to pursue, from a technical as well as from a political perspective, the objective of a total ban on nuclear testing, through reliable means of verification. Please allow me to note that such an objective would meet widely shared expectations in public opinion and political circles in my country.

For the first time in the history of the negotiations for the prohibition of chemical weapons, our goal finally seems to be within reach. The negotiations have proved to be much lengthier than at first expected, as a result of the difficulties in reconciling the innovative solutions gradually emerging with the diverging views between East and West as to the degree of transparency necessary to foster mutual confidence. As the history of these negotiations largely reflected, for better or for worse, the wider political circumstances of the time, they should reflect today the recent and extraordinary changes in world events. A new dimension of the role of the international community is taking shape, as particularly highlighted during the dramatic sequence of events after Kuwait's invasion by Iraq. (War always brings about a tremendous toll of suffering, and it was wise of you, Mr. President, to recall that in your opening statement on your appointment to the presidency of the CD.)

Only a limited number of weeks are left before the deadline we have set ourselves elapses; the General Assembly of the United Nations itself, at its last session, decided as a matter of the highest priority that the chemical weapons convention should be concluded before the end of the year. Should it not be possible for the Conference on Disarmament to meet this goal in time for its presentation at the next United Nations General Assembly, we are concerned that the whole project would risk postponement to a further round of negotiations of unpredictable length, with a negative impact on multilateral disarmament as a whole. We strongly believe, however, that it is possible to reach a conclusion in the negotiations and that this outcome will give new impetus to the future activity of the CD. I won't hide from you that most of the differences still existing do not seem of an unsurmountable nature to a layman not so directly involved like myself.

With great expectation we are following the extraordinary efforts you are deploying this year, at the level of delegations as well as in the context of the groupings, and we wholeheartedly support the endeavours of the German Chairman to reach compromises on the essential issues still unresolved as quickly as possible. At the same time other problems of a more technical nature could be dealt with later by the preparatory commission, with the assistance of the provisional technical secretariat.

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Allow me to briefly elaborate on some of these essential issues still pending. First of all, on the problem of verification which for years has been a stumbling-block to progress in various fields of disarmament. Italy considers that the convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons will be an unprecedented achievement in multilateral disarmament, in that it proposes a new set of verification measures not applicable solely to a given sector, whose management has been entrusted to a neutral and impartial organization. In the establishment of a genuine superpartes system lies the best possible guarantee that any bilateral aspect, which is usually involved when a country has doubts about compliance by someone else, will be adequately taken into account, while at the same time discouraging the inappropriate exercise of the right to trigger a challenge inspection. It seems to us that the team of inspectors, drawing on its autonomous powers of neutral evaluation, will be in the best position to assess, on site, whether the suspicion prompting the request justifies the prosecution or the interruption of the inspection; and to estimate the degree of intrusiveness required, without prejudice to the basic needs for the protection of confidentiality.

Those in Europe who have already opened up their national borders to intrusive bilateral inspections of military activities cannot but recognize the importance of the "supernational" nature of the convention, as an anticipation of a new era characterized by the increasing role of the international community in the consolidation of peace and security. Along the same line of thinking, Italy does not believe that its own continuous presence within the executive council would be essential for the protection of its national interests, provided the structure and functioning of the council reflects such a "new way of thinking" - looking ahead beyond the year 2000 and not backwards - and on the condition that the relevance of a country's chemical industry is given due consideration.

Furthermore, the convention will introduce new forms of collective solidarity, as in the case of assistance and protection against use or threat of use, as well as the concern to safeguard the economic and technological development of member States and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities not prohibited by the ban. Italy is also prepared to examine possible forms of cooperation to facilitate the burdensome tasks of destruction required by the convention.

The fact that important sectors of chemical industry, including those parts considered as "relevant" located also in our country, will be affected by the implementation of the convention, should not be taken lightly. We are aware of the concerns felt by industry about attaining a realistic balance between management of available resources and satisfactory deterrence without being overburdened with declarations and inspections. For this reason we are in favour of a pragmatic approach in order to leave a certain margin of discretion to the future organization and to ensure that the convention will be able, after its initial phase of application, to adapt itself to changing circumstances. In view of this, Italy is in favour of adopting an amendment procedure which, whilst naturally safeguarding the essential features of the ban, does not confine the convention within excessively rigid boundaries.

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Italy is ready, with an open mind, for the final effort aimed at shaping the real identity of the convention which, although comprising the fruit of differing perceptions of security, will also encompass several essential common points at the heart of the CW ban. In order not to be born outdated, the convention will have to reflect a minimal relinquishment of national sovereignty for the sake of collectively shared interests. It would be extremely disappointing, after so many years of negotiations, if the convention were to be signed by only a group of like-minded States: this is certainly not what all of us had in mind - nor, I believe, France, in its welcome offer to host a conference in Paris before the end of the year for the signature of the convention, with universality as one of its essential targets.

I should like to conclude by expressing Italy's complete confidence in the future role of the Conference on Disarmament. As in the past, it will have to adapt itself to new challenges even in its very structure without binding itself to any predetermined "magic" numbers for its composition, beyond which the realm of effectiveness would be lost. Important countries, both within and outside Europe, are awaiting the opportunity to make their positive contribution as full members of the CD. The revision of the competences of the CD will also have to be addressed as soon as possible after the conclusion of the negotiations on the CW ban. In the meantime, this body is already at grips with a new item related to the subject of transparency in armaments. I should like to confirm that it is Italy's sincere expectation that the consideration of this issue will be started without further delay, following the specific request formulated by the United Nations General Assembly. As a follow-on to the seminar held in Florence in 1990, a new opportunity for addressing the problem of arms transfers in an informal framework will be offered by Italy in the same town early next autumn, under the auspices of the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations, in order to examine the issue in a regional perspective. Arms transfers constitute only the first of a number of interrelated and interdependent problems, which could be seen by the CD, to the benefit of everyone, in a comprehensive and balanced way, such as conversion, non-proliferation, production, promotion of technological cooperation and the interrelationship between disarmament on a regional and on a global scale.

I wish to conclude by recalling the statement made in this chamber by Ambassador Komatina, when bidding farewell after years of clever and committed activity for the cause of disarmament: "If, as we expect, disarmament becomes a common endeavour and a norm in present-day life through ongoing negotiations, the role of the Conference will be strengthened." In endorsing such a hope, I would like to take the opportunity to express to our new Secretary-General, Ambassador Berasategui, from a country, Argentina, of ancient and fraternal ties with Italy, the most sincere congratulations on his appointment and confident good wishes for success in the fulfilment of his important responsibilities.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy for his important statement he has just made and his kind words addressed to myself. I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium, Ambassador Servais.

Mr. SERVAIS (Belgium) (translated from French): As I am addressing this body for the first time since your election, Mr. President, I should like to congratulate you wholeheartedly on taking up the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and wish you definite success in the discharge of your important duties. Your experience and wisdom will undoubtedly help to advance the Conference's work, and I should like to assure you, here, of the entire support of my delegation in your burdensome task. I also take this opportunity to welcome the presence among us of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of your country, Mr. Bagbeni, whose statement we listened to very carefully. I also welcome the presence among us of His Excellency Ambassador Bruno Bottai, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, a country that we all love and admire both for its prestigeous past and for the outstanding role it plays on the international scene in general, and more specifically in disarmament matters. May I also be permitted to associate myself fully with the expressions of respect and appreciation we have heard on the occasion of International Women's Day? Their interest and their support for our efforts to promote disarmament offer valuable encouragement to all of us. Like the preceding speakers, I wish to congratulate Ambassador Berasategui on the occasion of his appointment to the post of Secretary-General of our Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Having distributed barrowloads of compliments, I now come to the substance of my message. At a time when, under your enlightened leadership, the negotiations aimed at achieving a chemical weapons ban are entering a phase which we all hope will be decisive, I should like to spell out the position of my authorities on a particular point related to the choice of headquarters of the future organization. My authorities consider that The Hague offers incontrovertible advantages which many of us were able to see for ourselves last summer. There is no need to praise the traditions of hospitality or organization of our Dutch friends, and for that reason, while it fully appreciates the good points that other countries might offer, Belgium has chosen to give its firm support to the candidature of the Netherlands.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Belgium for his statement and his kind words. I give the floor to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador von Wagner.

Mr. von WAGNER (Germany): I have asked for the floor just to make some administrative announcements due to some changes in meetings which are scheduled either in the tentative timetable of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons or in the programme of the Conference. As Mr. Morris has already announced, his meeting tomorrow will be cancelled. The same is true for the meeting which is scheduled for this afternoon on open-ended consultations on article IX. It will not be held. On the other hand, on behalf of Ambassador Tóth, I may announce that he wishes to hold private

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consultations tomorrow morning after 10 a.m. in Room I beside this Conference Room, and since the meeting of the Group of 21 was scheduled for Room I tomorrow, I may announce on behalf of Ambassador Calovski that this meeting scheduled in Room I will be held in Room V. I repeat, the meeting of the Group of 21 on outer space will be held not in Room I but in Room V.

Mr. RANJBAR (Islamic Republic of Iran): My Ambassador was supposed to make a statement today on behalf of the Group of 21, but unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond his control, at the last minute he found himself unable to do so. Although somewhat late, I wish, however, to make the following statement for the record.

First of all, I would like to welcome His Excellency the Minister for External Affairs of Zaire, Mr. Nzengeya, and His Excellency the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Ambassador Bottai, to our meeting this morning. Secondly, on behalf of the Group of 21, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Berasategui on his assumption of the post of Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We are confident that, with his recognized diplomatic skill, he will be able to guide the Conference in the most efficient way. His Excellency Ambassador Berasategui takes up his new responsibilities at a time when a bright prospect has opened to the Conference. In the light of the new situation in international relations, the Conference on Disarmament can play a significant role towards the creation of a more secure world. Under his able guidance the Conference will achieve this goal.

Let me also join the previous speakers in welcoming the women participating in the eighth congress commemorating International Women's Day. Normally, it is assumed that matters related to armaments are handled by men, whereas it is quite clear that women also encourage the cause of disarmament for peace. We hope that next year, when they come to visit us, we will have been able to conclude the chemical weapons convention.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I would now like to turn to the timetable of meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies next week. The secretariat has had an informal paper distributed containing a timetable which, as usual, is merely indicative and subject to change if necessary. I would like to emphasize that under this timetable, immediately after the meeting on Thursday, 12 March, the Conference will hold an initial meeting on item 2, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". On that understanding, I suggest we adopt the informal paper.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): As we have reached the end of the agenda, I shall adjourn the meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will take place on Thursday, 12 March, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.